

Remembering Manzanar

Manzanar National Historic Site was established to preserve the stories of the internment of nearly 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II and to serve as a reminder to this and future generations of the fragility of American civil liberties.

Relocations recur throughout the history of Manzanar and the Owens Valley. The Paiute and early settlers as well as Japanese Americans all were uprooted from their homes.

American Indians began utilizing the valley almost 10,000 years ago. About 1,500 years ago the Owens Valley Paiute established settlements here. They hunted, fished, collected pine nuts, and practiced a form of irrigated agriculture.

Miners and ranchers moved into the valley in the early 1860s and homesteaded Paiute lands raising cattle, sheep, fruit, wheat, and other crops. The military was called in and forcibly relocated nearly 1,000 Owens Valley Paiute to Fort Tejon in 1863. Many Paiute returned to the Owens valley and worked on local ranches.

The town of Manzanar—the Spanish word for “apple orchard”—developed as an agricultural settlement beginning in 1910. Farmers grew apples, pears, peaches, potatoes, and alfalfa on several thousand acres surrounding the town.

The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power began acquiring water rights in the valley in 1905 and completed the Los Angeles Aqueduct in 1913. Land buy-outs continued in the 1920s, and by 1929 Los Angeles owned all of Manzanar's land and water rights. Within five years, the town was abandoned. In the 1930s local residents pinned their economic hopes on tourism. With the onset of World War II tourism diminished.

In 1942 the U.S. Army leased 6,200 acres at Manzanar from Los Angeles to establish a center to hold Japanese Americans during World War II. Though some valley

residents opposed the construction of the internment camp, others helped build it and worked here. Among these were a few Owens Valley Paiute whose own families had been exiled earlier from these lands.

Manzanar National Historic Site is 200 miles north of Los Angeles on U.S. 395. Lodging and food facilities are in Independence and Lone Pine. The Eastern California Museum in Independence has several exhibits related to Manzanar.

For more information, write to: Superintendent, Manzanar National Historic Site, P.O. Box 426, Independence, CA 93526-0426; or visit the www.nps.gov/manz website.

Manzanar is one of more than 380 parks in the National Park System. The National Park Service cares for these special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage. Visit www.nps.gov to learn more about parks and National Park Service programs in America's communities.

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Firebreaks separated the camp into clusters of four blocks and provided open space for sports, social events, and victory gardens. The Children's Village orphanage and high school auditorium were eventually built in firebreaks.

Touring the Historic Site

When Manzanar War Relocation Center closed in 1945, most of the buildings were sold as scrap lumber or moved to private property throughout the Owens Valley. Besides the original sentry posts and auditorium, most of what remains consists of foundations, concrete slabs, and garden features. The National Park Service adaptively restored the auditorium as an interpretive center with exhibits and a film. Eventually two barracks, a mess hall, a guard tower, and some rock gardens will be reconstructed or restored.

While taking this one-way auto tour, imagine what daily life was like when 10,000 people of Japanese ancestry lived here. Stop occasionally and walk through the site. Please do your part to protect Manzanar. Do not disturb, collect, or remove any artifacts or natural features.



A military policeman checks a vehicle at the entrance. ANSEL ADAMS, 1943, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

- 1 Entrance** Stonemason-internee Ryoza Kado built the military police sentry post and internal police post in 1942.
- 2 Police Station** Internees gathered here December 6, 1942, to protest the jailing of Harry Ueno, who was accused of beating a fellow internee. Two internees were killed and 10 were wounded when military police fired on the crowd. The incident became known as the “Manzanar Riot.”

- 3 Newspaper** Internees published the *Manzanar Free Press* in Building 1 in the southeast corner of this block. The newspaper was self-supporting through subscriptions and advertising.
- 4 Administrative Section** Offices and housing for the War Relocation Authority (WRA) staff and their families were located here, along with a post office and town hall.
- 5 Bachelor's Block** Block 2 residents included about 100 Japanese Americans who volunteered to help build the center in March 1942.
- 6 Manzanar High School** The school, located here in Block 7, opened in October 1942 and graduated classes in 1943, 1944, and 1945.
- 7 Auditorium** Constructed by internees in 1944, this building housed a gymnasium and a stage for plays, graduation ceremonies, and other social functions. Today it serves as an interpretive center.
- 8 Fire Department** The fire department, in the center of Block 13 near A Street, responded to occasional fires caused by short circuits and kitchen mishaps.
- 9 South Firebreak** Tennis, volleyball, and basketball courts were located in this area, one of two east-west firebreaks.
- 10 Typical Block** Building locations in Block 14 are marked to illustrate the layout of a typical block. A historic mess hall was moved here in December 2002. The National Park Service plans to eventually restore additional buildings to this block.

Each 20-by-100-foot barracks was divided into four rooms. Up to eight people were assigned to each room.

- 11 Photographer's Quarters** Toyo Miyatake, a professional photographer from Los Angeles, lived here in Block 20. He smuggled a camera lens into the camp but eventually was allowed to document daily life. A few of his photos appear in this brochure.
- 12 Homestead** The Kemp/Lenbeck Farm was located near the locust trees in the early 1900s.



Baseball was a popular pastime. ©ARCHIE MIYATAKE FROM THE TOYO MIYATAKE COLLECTION

- 13 Baseball Fields** Two of the larger baseball fields were situated here in the North Firebreak between Blocks 19 and 25.
- 14 Catholic Church** Roman Catholic internees attended services at the St. Francis Xavier parish in the Block 25 Recreation Building.
- 15 Manzanar Town Site** The center of the town of Manzanar, established in 1910, was 350 yards to the east. The town had about 25 homes in the mid-1920s, when Los Angeles was purchasing water rights in the area.

- 16 Shepherd Ranch** From 1864 to 1905, John Shepherd raised cattle, horses, mules, and grain here. George Chaffey purchased Shepherd's holdings in 1905, established the town of Manzanar, and promoted the growing of apples.



John Shepherd built this elaborate home here in 1873. EASTERN CALIFORNIA MUSEUM

- 17 Orchards** South of the tour road are more than 100 remaining fruit trees planted by Chaffey's Owens Valley Improvement Company around 1910.
- 18 Garden** Immediately south of the tour road at H Street is Block 34's mess hall garden, one of the most elaborate gardens in the relocation center.
- 19 Wilder Farm** Romeo Wilder and his family raised apples here from 1908 to 1925. He named Manzanar in 1908. Remains of the Wilder home are located about 50 feet west of the tour road.

- 20 Hospital** Stone and concrete steps, a pond, and floor slabs of the hospital laundry, heating room, and morgue can be seen west of the tour route.
- 21 Children's Village** One hundred and one children of Japanese ancestry were housed in an orphanage 125 yards south-east of the tour road.
- 22 Cemetery** Fifteen of the 150 people who died at the relocation center were buried here; most of the others were cremated. Six burials remain today. Relatives removed the other nine after the war.
- 23 Buddhist Temple** One of three Buddhist temples was located here. The other two were in Blocks 13 and 27.
- 24 Garden** Residents of Block 12 built an elaborate garden next to their mess hall, as did residents of several other blocks.
- 25 Blocks 9 and 10** Some of the first internees, from Terminal Island near San Pedro, Calif., were housed here.

- 26 Block 3** Two hundred and twenty-seven Japanese Americans from Bainbridge Island, near Seattle, arrived by train April 1, 1942, and lived in this block.



Internees who made camouflage netting for the military had to be U.S. citizens. DOROTHEA LANGE, 1942, NATIONAL ARCHIVES

- 27 Net Factory** Internees produced camouflage netting for the U.S. military in 1942 at a factory southwest of the intersection of D and Manzanar Streets.